

Discourse 9

*“Zeh Yitnu... Machatzit HaShekel -
This shall they give... a half shekel”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Mishpatim,
Parshat Shekalim, Shabbat Mevarchim Adar, 5715
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,⁵¹⁷ “This shall they give – everyone who passes through the census – a half *shekel* of the sacred *shekel*, the *shekel* is twenty *geras*, half a *shekel* as a portion to *HaShem*-יהוה.” Since we only must give a half *shekel* and not a full *shekel*, we need to understand why the Torah states the amount of a full *shekel*, that “the *shekel* is twenty *geras*.” This being so, the Torah should have simply stated to give ten *geras*. Furthermore, since in matters of holiness, a half is not an element of superiority, but on the contrary, indicates the opposite, we therefore must understand why the commandment is specifically to give a half *shekel*.

Now, although we find that the measurements of the Holy Ark also included half an *ammah*,⁵¹⁸ this is to teach us that even a Jew who is bound to Torah, that is, a Torah scholar who invests himself in the study of Torah, must nevertheless know

⁵¹⁷ Exodus 30:13

⁵¹⁸ Exodus 25:10; 37:1

that he is only a half.⁵¹⁹ However, this only relates to how a person should feel about himself, but regarding matters that one must give to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, the verse states,⁵²⁰ "All the fatty parts are *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה" and as Rambam explains,⁵²¹ "Everything given for the sake of the Name of God who is good, should be of the best and highest quality." Thus, the law regarding holy consecrations and gifts to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is that we do not give from a half or a part, but specifically from the whole and perfect.⁵²² This being so, we must understand the matter of a half *shekel*, in which we must specifically give a half.

There is an additional matter that is not understood. Namely, the *mitzvah* of the half *shekel* rectifies the sin of the golden calf, as stated,⁵²³ "It shall be an atonement for your souls." Now, since the sin of the golden calf was a general communal sin, we must say that the *mitzvah* of the half *shekel* is also general. However, though it is general, it does not need to be whole, but must specifically be half. Now, we cannot say that the reason Torah specifies half a *shekel* is because it does not want to mention a lesser and inferior coinage (the *gera*) by stating "ten *gera*," but a superior coinage (the *shekel*) and therefore it states, "This shall they give... a half *shekel*." This is because the Torah could have stated that they should give a

⁵¹⁹ Rabbeinu Bachaye and Baal HaTurim to Exodus 25:10; See Likkutei Sichot Vol. 26 p. 253, note 43.

⁵²⁰ Leviticus 3:16

⁵²¹ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Issurei Mizbe'ach 7:11

⁵²² See Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 31 p. 132

⁵²³ Exodus 30:15:16

beka (as we find elsewhere in the Torah),⁵²⁴ which is worth half a *shekel* in a single coin. Thus, from the fact that Torah specifically states “a half *shekel*,” it is understood that this general matter of rectifying the sin of the golden calf, comes about specifically through the matter of a half.

The general explanation is that the Jewish people give a half *shekel* and through doing so, the second half is given from Above. This is why the verse is repetitive and states, “A half *shekel* of the sacred *shekel*... half a *shekel* as a portion to *HaShem*-יהוה,” (in which “half *shekel*” is said twice).

2.

Now, this may be understood by prefacing with the statement in Etz Chayim,⁵²⁵ that there are four levels in the general totality of the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*). These are the lights (*Orot*), vessels (*Keilim*), garments (*Levushim*) and chambers (*Heichalot*). These four levels correspond to the four letters of the Name *HaShem*-יהוה and also correspond to the four worlds, Emanation, Creation, Formation and Action (*Atzilut*, *Briyah*, *Yetzirah* *Asiyah*).

Now, since the four levels, lights, vessels, garments and chambers (*Orot*, *Keilim*, *Levushim*, *Heichalot*) correspond to

⁵²⁴ Genesis 24:22; Exodus 38:26 (Also see the *Sicha* that follows this discourse, *Torat Menachem*, Vol. 13 p. 278.)

⁵²⁵ Etz Chayim, Shaar 42 (Shaar Drushei ABY”A) Ch. 1-2; Also see Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5563 p. 248 and on (and with the glosses in Ohr HaTorah, Shir HaShirim Vol. 3, p. 973); 5564 p. 78 (and with the glosses in Ohr HaTorah VaYakhel p. 2,134); Ohr HaTorah, Chayei Sarah 108b.

the four worlds, Emanation, Creation, Formation and Action (*Atzilut, Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*) this comes to teach and inform us that through understanding the matter of the four worlds, we may understand the matter of the four levels. That is, though the three levels; vessels, garments and chambers (*Keilim, Levushim, Heichalot*) are one general matter, this being the matter of the vessels (*Keilim*) that reveal the light (*Ohr*) so that it should be revealed and bring about its effects, nevertheless, upon examining them more particularly, the difference between them is similar to the difference between the three worlds Creation, Formation and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*).

The explanation is that the relationship between the lights (*Orot*) and vessels (*Keilim*) is like the relationship between the world of Emanation-*Atzilut* and the world of Creation-*Briyah*, as understood from the statement above that the four levels correspond to the four worlds of Emanation, Creation, Formation and Action (*Atzilut, Briyah, Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*), respectively. Thus, since the world of Emanation-*Atzilut* is the aspect of intangible “nothingness” (*Ayin*), whereas the world of Creation-*Briyah* is the aspect of tangible “somethingness” (*Yesh*),⁵²⁶ this likewise is the relationship between the lights (*Orot*) and vessels (*Keilim*). That is, the lights (*Orot*) are an aspect of intangible “nothingness” (*Ayin*) whereas, relative to the lights (*Orot*), the vessels are an aspect of tangible “somethingness” (*Yesh*).⁵²⁷

⁵²⁶ See Torah Ohr, Mishpatim 76b; Likkutei Torah, Masei 95a and elsewhere.

⁵²⁷ See Torah Ohr, Bereishit 4b and elsewhere.

Now, although, in comparison to each other, the two are as distant from each other as the comparative distance between intangible “nothingness” (*Ayin*) and tangible “somethingness” (*Yesh*), nonetheless, since the lights (*Orot*) were emanated in a manner that they should become settled in the vessels (*Keilim*), therefore the vessels (*Keilim*) were also emanated in a manner that they would be capable of withstanding the lights (*Orot*), so that they should receive and unify with the light. Thus, because of these two matters, a union is brought about between the lights (*Orot*) and vessels (*Keilim*), even though, in their essence, they are not comparable to each other.

This then, is the meaning of the teaching,⁵²⁸ “He and His life force are one, He and His organs are one.” That is, even though the Zohar distinguishes between them and states that they “are one” twice, indicating that the unity of the vessels (*Keilim*) with *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is dissimilar to the unity of the lights (*Orot*) with *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, nevertheless, since the lights (*Orot*) settle within the vessels (*Keilim*) and the vessels (*Keilim*) receive the lights (*Orot*), this brings about the unity of “He and His organs are one,” which is the matter of the unity of the lights (*Orot*) with the vessels (*Keilim*).

This may be better understood from how this exists in man below. Since “man was created in the image of God,”⁵²⁹ meaning that man below has the likeness of the Supernal Man upon the throne, therefore, through understanding these matters

⁵²⁸ Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 3b

⁵²⁹ See Genesis 1:27

as they are below in man, we may come to understand the matter of lights (*Orot*) and vessels (*Keilim*) as they are in Godliness Above.

Now, as known, what the Kabbalists called lights (*Orot*) and vessels (*Keilim*) in relation to Godliness above, corresponds to form (*Tzurah*) and substance (*Chomer*) in man below. That is, even though form and substance are very distant from each other, nevertheless, they unify and bond, so that the form (*Tzurah*) is specifically revealed according to the substance (*Chomer*) and it is through the manifestation of the form (*Tzurah*) in the substance (*Chomer*), that the substance (*Chomer*) becomes refined.

The organs of the body, which are the vessels (*Keilim*) for the faculties of the soul, are an example of this. For example, the substance (*Chomer*) of the eye is the vessel (*Klee*) for the form (*Tzurah*) of the light of vision that manifests within it. However, even though the substance (*Chomer*) of the eye is physical (meaning that though compared to other organs the eye is refined and is like the spiritual of the physical, it nevertheless is physical), nonetheless, the form of sight is specifically revealed according to the substance of the eye. That is, the substance (*Chomer*) of the eye is refined, in that it is translucent (a transparent lens) and according to the composition of the white and black of the eye, so will be the revelation of the form (*Tzurah*) of vision. In other words, the revelation of the form (*Tzurah*) is specifically according to the manner of the substance (*Chomer*).

Beyond this, the same applies to the spiritual matter of the eye, this being the matter of a good and positive eye and its opposite. In other words, this too depends on the composition of the substance (*Chomer*) of the physical eye, because the substance (*Chomer*) of the eye has both blood and water. If it is composed of an overabundance of blood, which is the aspect of redness, then its sight will be in a manner that is the opposite of a good and positive eye. In contrast, if the waters are more abundant, its vision will be in a way of a good and positive eye.

The same applies to the form of the intellect (*Sechel*) which manifests in the substance (*Chomer*) of the brain. It too is specifically according to the condition of its substance (*Chomer*). An example is the brain of wisdom-*Chochmah* which is cold and moist, whereas the brain of understanding-*Binah* is hot and dry. In other words, since the nature of water is to adhere (this being the aspect of the kindnesses-*Chassadim*), therefore the substance (*Chomer*) of the brain that is cold and moist, is where the point of the intellect manifests.

In contrast, since the nature of fire is to separate (this being the aspect of the judgements-*Gevurot*, as known that judgments arise from the conclusion of understanding-*Binah*), it is in the substance (*Chomer*) of the brain that is hot and dry, within which is the part of the intellect that divides things into their particulars.⁵³⁰ The same applies to the aspect of

⁵³⁰ See Zohar I 151a; Zohar III 10b, 11a, 65a; Etz Chayim, Shaar 13 (Shaar Arich Anpin) Ch. 8, Shaar 14 (Shaar Abba v'Imma) Ch. 2; Biurei HaZohar of the Mittler Rebbe 145d and elsewhere.

knowledge-*Da'at*. It too is according to the composition of the substance (*Chomer*) of the brain.

Similarly, the leanings to either the kindnesses (*Chassadim*) or the judgments (*Gevurot*) also depends on the composition of the substance (*Chomer*) of the brain. For, even though the Zohar and the teachings of Chassidut⁵³¹ explain that one's leanings and proclivities toward either kindnesses (*Chassadim*) or judgments (*Gevurot*) are due to the essence of his soul, like the academy of Shammai who leaned toward stringency and the academy of Hillel who leaned toward leniency, because the souls of the academy of Shammai were rooted in the judgements (*Gevurot*) and the souls of the academy of Hillel were rooted in the kindnesses (*Chassadim*),⁵³² this matter only applies to the general construct of the substance (*Chomer*) and form (*Tzurah*), in that the general construct of the substance (*Chomer*) accords to the manner of the form (*Tzurah*). However, when it comes to the particular ways that the form (*Tzurah*) is revealed, they accord to the nature and composition of the substance (*Chomer*). Moreover, all this is because of the union of the substance (*Chomer*) and the form (*Tzurah*), due to which the revelation of the light of the form (*Tzurah*) of the soul powers (such as seeing, hearing, smelling and tasting etc.) is according to the substance (*Chomer*) of the vessels.

⁵³¹ See Hakdamat HaMelaket to Tanya 4a

⁵³² Zohar III 245a; Taamei HaMitzvot of Rabbi Chayim Vital, Parshat Teitzei (23:19); Shaar HaGilgulim, end of introduction 36; Ramaz (Rabbi Moshe Zacuto) to Zohar 141b; Tanya Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 13 (119a), and elsewhere.

Thus, the same is understood Above about the Supernal Man regarding the aspects of lights (*Orot*) and vessels (*Keilim*). That is, even though they are not at all comparable to each other, nevertheless, the revelation of the light (*Ohr*) is specifically according to the manner of the vessel (*Klee*). Moreover, the vessel (*Klee*) is unified to the light (*Ohr*) to the point that the entire matter of the vessel (*Klee*) is to reveal the light (*Ohr*) according to its substance. This is to a greater extent than the analogy of light that illuminates through glass, in which the color of the light accords to the color of the glass. For, in that analogy, the light itself never acquires the property of the color and only appears to possess that color. In contrast, in regard to the matter of lights (*Orot*) and vessels (*Kelim*) as they are Above in Godliness, the vessel (*Klee*) has an actual effect on the light (*Ohr*) so that it is revealed specifically according to the manner of the vessel (*Klee*). For, in and of themselves, the lights (*Orot*) are simple [essences] – and even according to the view that the lights (*Orot*) are not simple [essences], nonetheless, in comparison to the vessels (*Kelim*) all opinions agree that the lights (*Orot*) are simple [essences]⁵³³ and that through the vessels (*Keilim*) the lights (*Orot*) are given form according to the vessel (*Klee*), because the lights (*Orot*) are unified to the vessels (*Keilim*) and the entire purpose of the vessels (*Keilim*) is to reveal the light (*Ohr*), in that the light (*Ohr*) should be revealed according to the matter of the vessels (*Keilim*).

⁵³³ See Sefer HaArachim – Chabad, Vol. 4, section entitled “Orot d’Sefirot” – “Pshitutam” and “Tziyuram.”

3.

However, the matter of the garments (*Levushim*) is that they hide and conceal the light (*Ohr*). In other words, even though the vessels (*Keilim*) also conceal the light (*Ohr*), nevertheless, there is an aspect of the light (*Ohr*) that the vessels (*Keilim*) indeed reveal, which is the external aspect of the light (*Ohr*) to which they are unified.

To further clarify, it was explained above that the lights (*Orot*) and vessels (*Keilim*) are the aspects of the intangible “nothing” (*Ayin*) and the tangible “something” (*Yesh*). The vessels (*Keilim*) conceal the light (*Ohr*) as it is in a state of intangible “nothingness” (*Ayin*) and reveal the aspect of the light (*Ohr*) as it is in a state of tangible “somethingness.” Nevertheless, in relation to the aspect of the light (*Ohr*) that is revealed through the vessels (*Keilim*), the vessels (*Keilim*) are unified with this aspect of the light (*Ohr*) and therefore reveal light (*Ohr*). In contrast, the garments (*Levushim*) are in a state of division and separation from the light (*Ohr*) and cover over it.

Now, this too is understood from how it is in man. For, just as the matter of the vessels (*Keilim*) was previously explained based on how they are in man, so likewise, the matter of garments (*Levushim*) may also be understood from the garments of man. The garments of man indeed have some relation to him. This is why the garments of his head are different than the garments of his body or of his feet. Moreover, the difference is not just in their measurements (being that the

garments must fit according to the measurement of that which is en clothed within them), but also in their coarseness or softness. That is, the coarseness or softness of the garments is according to the coarseness or softness of the organs that they enclothe. This is why there is a difference between the garments of the head, body and feet. Nevertheless, it is simple to understand that the garments are completely separate and distinct from the person himself.

Now, just as this is so when it comes to physical garments, it likewise is so when it comes to spiritual garments, these being thought (*Machshavah*), speech (*Dibur*), and action (*Ma'aseh*), in that they too are separate. It goes without saying that this is so when it comes to speech (*Dibur*) and action (*Ma'aseh*). However, this is also the case regarding the letters of thought (*Machshavah*), even the loftiest levels of thought (*Machshavah*). For there are three levels of thought; thought of thought (*Machshavah She'bMachshavah*), speech of thought (*Dibur She'bMachshavah*) and action of thought (*Ma'aseh She'bMachshavah*).⁵³⁴

Thought of thought (*Machshavah She'bMachshavah*) refers to the letters that come with the flash of intellectual insight, in which the letters are not at all felt, except that it must be said that there are letters there. Even though this is the loftiest level of thought and its letters are unfelt, nonetheless, even these letters are separate from the intellect. Proof of this is the fact that the same intellect can be expressed in different

⁵³⁴ See Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 41, and the notes there.

letters, which is the very matter of a garment, as it states,⁵³⁵ “You will exchange them like a garment.” This demonstrates that they are separate from the intellect.

Now, even when the intellect is exchanged with different letters, due to which there is a diminishment of the light and illumination, since as known, it is in the letters that come forth with the flash of insight that the light is palpably felt, and then, when the intellect is enclothed in alternate letters the light and illumination is no longer felt, whereas what is felt is primarily the grasp and comprehension, nevertheless, the very fact that the intellect can be expressed and garbed in alternate letters, demonstrates that the letters are separate from the intellect.

This may be understood through an additional explanation. It is explained in several places that the reason the letters are already present immediately upon having a flash of insight is because the root of the letters is from the pre-intellect (*Kadmoot HaSechel*) or from the essential self of the soul, which are loftier than the intellect.⁵³⁶ Therefore, since they already are present in the root of the intellect, therefore immediately upon the revelation of the intellect, the letters are present.

On the other hand, even though it must be said that immediately upon having a flash of insight the letters are already present, this is not a result of the intellect itself, but

⁵³⁵ Psalms 102:27

⁵³⁶ See Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh Ch. 5; Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 38 through 42, and the notes there.

because their root is higher than the intellect. This is why this particular flash of insight comes forth in this particular person with these particular letters, whereas in a different person they will come forth in different letters.

An example is the fact that we observe that Tosefot, Rabbeinu Asher (the Rosh), and Rabbeinu Nissim (the Ran) can all say the same thing, but each one expresses it in different letters. This is because the letters are not a result of the flash of insight itself, but come from the soul, and therefore the letters are different. From this it is understood that since the letters do not originate in the intellect itself, (but from the human soul, which is the speaking soul) they are separate and removed from the intellect.

Now, all this is in regard to the aspect of thought of thought (*Machshavah SheB'Machshavah*). Therefore, it is certainly so in regard to speech of thought (*Dibur SheB'Machshavah*) and action of thought (*Ma'aseh SheB'Machshavah*), in which the speaker orders the letters of his speech according to the recipient, in which case the letters are obviously separate from the intellect.

This then, is the difference between vessels (*Keilim*) and garments (*Levushim*). That is, the vessels (*Keilim*) are unified with the light (*Ohr*) and the revelation of the light of the form (*Tzurah*) is specifically according to the manner of the substance (*Chomer*) of the vessel. This is not the case, however, when it comes to the garments (*Levushim*) which are separate, and wherein the revelation of the intellect is not according to the manner of the garment. For, it is possible for the intellect,

in and of itself, to come to be revealed in various different manners, and the division of the letters is not due to the intellect, but rather, there are differences in the letters themselves on account of their root in the essence of the soul.

Another difference between vessels (*Keilim*) and garments (*Levushim*), is that the vessels (*Keilim*) have vitality in them on account of the light (*Ohr*) that is manifest within them. In contrast, the garments (*Levushim*) do not possess vitality in them, even when there is light (*Ohr*) manifest within them. An example is the organs of the body or the organs of the soul, which are the powers of the soul. Due to the manifestation of the radiance of the soul within them, they possess vitality.

For example, the brain possess vitality within it due to the manifestation of intellect within it. This is as stated in chapter fifty-one of Tanya,⁵³⁷ that it is “the brains in the head that first receive the power and vitality that is appropriate to them according to their composition and character, which are the faculties of wisdom-*Chochmah*, understanding-*Binah*, and knowledge-*Da’at* etc.” We thus see that the brain is vitalized by the light and intellect that is manifest within it.

In contrast, when it comes to the garments (*Levushim*), there is no vitality in the letters through the manifestation of intellect within them. That is, even when a person speaks passionately regarding a particular matter, speaking words that come from the heart, where it is apparent that there is vitality in

⁵³⁷ See Tanya, Ch. 51 p. 71b

the letters (in that the letters too are more alive), nevertheless, this is not the vitality of the letters themselves (meaning that it is not their own life), but only that something that is alive is found in them. The letters themselves, however, have no vitality. However, this is not the case when it comes to the vessels (*Keilim*), which themselves are alive due to the light (*Ohr*) within them. This is all because the vessels (*Keilim*) are unified, whereas the garments (*Levushim*) are separate.

Now, the reason that the vessels (*Keilim*) are unified whereas the garments (*Levushim*) are separate, is not because of their level. That is, it is not because the garments (*Levushim*) are lower and therefore are unable to unify with the light (*Ohr*). For, the opposite is true, the letters of thought are the physicality of the spirituality of the soul, whereas the refined spirituality of the substance of the organs of the body that is capable of receiving the form of the soul, is the spiritual of the physical, and as known, the physical of the spiritual is much loftier than the spiritual of the physical. Yet, even so, the letters are separate, whereas the substance (*Chomer*) is unified to the form (*Tzurah*). What this demonstrates is that the difference between the vessels (*Keilim*) and the garments (*Levushim*) is not due to their level, but it rather is this way because of their essential being, in that the vessels (*Keilim*) are unified to the soul, whereas the garments (*Levushim*) are separate.

From the above, the matter is understood as it applies Above in Godliness, that the vessels (*Keilim*) are unified with the light (*Ohr*) and reveal it, whereas the garments (*Levushim*) are separate from the light (*Ohr*) and cover over it.

4.

However, we still must understand this better. For, according to what was explained above regarding the difference between the vessels (*Keilim*) and the garments (*Levushim*), it arises that the matter of vessels (*Keilim*) is specifically in the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*, wherein “He and His life force are one, He and His organs are one.” In contrast, in the world of Creation-*Briyah*, about which it states,⁵³⁸ “He and His life force are not one, He and His organs are not one,” the matter of vessels (*Keilim*) is not applicable. For, the matter of vessels (*Keilim*) is that of union, and since in the world of Creation-*Briyah* there is no matter of union (*Yichud*), it therefore is not applicable for vessels (*Keilim*) to be there, but only garments (*Levushim*). In other words, when it states, “You have made garments for them, from which souls issue forth to man,” this does not only specifically refer to the world of Formation-*Yetzirah*, but also to the world of Creation-*Briyah*. However, based on what we explained before, that the four matters of lights, vessels, garments and chambers (*Orot, Keilim, Levushim, Heichalot*) correspond to the four worlds of Emanation, Creation, Formation and Action (*Atzilut, Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*) it is understood that the vessels (*Keilim*) are in the world of Creation-*Briyah*.

⁵³⁸ Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 17a

The explanation of the matter is that when it comes to the garments (*Levushim*) themselves, there are two manners. The first manner in the garments (*Levushim*) is like the enclothing (*Hitlabshoot*) of the various statures (*Partzufim*) within one another. That is, even though this is a matter of garments (*Levushim*) rather than vessels (*Keilim*), nevertheless, this enclothing (*Hitlabshoot*) is in such a manner that the dominion and conduct is according to the upper aspect. In other words, even though the upper aspect undergoes change and comes forth according to the manner of the lower aspect, nevertheless, the upper aspect is dominant.

This may be compared to what we observe in man below in regard to the manifestation of the desire within the intellect, similar to the verse,⁵³⁹ “a bribe blinds.” For, the desire (*Ratzon*) itself is simple and is not manifest and grasped, which itself is the difference between the desire (*Ratzon*) and the intellect (*Sechel*). This is to say that intellect (*Sechel*) comes forth in a way of manifestation and grasp, whereas desire does not come forth in a way of manifestation (*Hitlabshoot*), but is rather actualized specifically by way of decree, as it states,⁵⁴⁰ “There is no reason for desire.” Additionally, intellect divides into various particulars and details, whereas, as known, there are no details in the desire.

Now, when desire (*Ratzon*) becomes enclothed in intellect (*Sechel*) we then see that the desire has reason. This

⁵³⁹ Exodus 23:8; Deuteronomy 16:19

⁵⁴⁰ Yonat Ilem Ch. 2; Maamarei Admor HaEmtza'ee, Bamidbar Vol. 3 p. 1,054; Vol. 4 p. 1,504; Dvarim Vol. 1 p. 21; Discourse entitled “*Mah Rav Tuvcha*” 5692 Ch. 2 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5692 p. 307 and on).

being so, the desire (*Ratzon*) undergoes change according to the intellect (*Sechel*), in that it comes to be enclothed and grasped, and necessarily also comes to have particulars in it. For, if there were no details, the intellect would be incapable of garbing it.

Now, although desire (*Ratzon*) undergoes change according to the intellect (*Sechel*), nevertheless, the desire (*Ratzon*) is dominant. For, when desire (*Ratzon*) becomes enclothed in intellect (*Sechel*) it is in a manner that even when he does not know the reason, he nevertheless is compelled to fulfill it, since that is the desire. In other words, when desire (*Ratzon*) manifests within intellect (*Sechel*) to give a reason for the desire, at which point he understands the reason for it as well, it is not that its entire matter was transformed and became intellectual. Rather, it remains as a desire (*Ratzon*), in that even if he does not know the reason, he nevertheless is compelled to fulfill the desire.

This itself explains the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,⁵⁴¹ “Do not sit and weigh the *mitzvot* of the Torah, since the most minor of the minor and the most major of the major are equal.” This is because the *mitzvot* are the Supernal will and desire (*Ratzon*) of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, as in the teaching,⁵⁴² “It gives Me satisfaction of spirit that I commanded and My desire was actualized.” Thus, since there is no division of particulars in the desire (*Ratzon*), therefore within the desire itself, there is no difference between the most

⁵⁴¹ See Midrash Dvarim Rabba 6:2 and elsewhere

⁵⁴² Torat Kohanim and Rashi to Leviticus 1:9; Sifri and Rashi to Numbers 28:8

seemingly insignificant *mitzvah* and the most seemingly major *mitzvah*.

However, the study of Torah is a matter of comprehension and is the explanation and expression of the *mitzvot*. Thus, when it comes comprehension there are distinctions and divisions of particulars and differences between what is minor and what is major. Therefore, when the desire (*Ratzon*) for the *mitzvot* becomes en clothed in the intellect (*Sechel*) of Torah, though according to the comprehension of Torah there indeed are distinctions between the minor and the major, nevertheless, as known, “the most minor of the minor and the most major of the major are equal,” since the desire (*Ratzon*), wherein there are no divisions of particulars, is dominant.

It is similar Above in Godliness, as we find that the exodus from Egypt came about through the aspects of “the father-*Abba* and mother-*Imma* en clothing the arms of *Arich Anpin*.”⁵⁴³ In other words, even though this is a matter of a garment-*Levush*-לבוש (as indicated by the term “en clothing-*Hilbeeshoo*-הלבישו”) and not a matter of the vessels (*Keilim*), nevertheless, it is in a manner in which the upper aspect is dominant. For, according to the conduct of father-*Abba* and mother-*Imma*, in and of themselves, the matter of redemption would not have been possible at all. In fact, the contrary is true,

⁵⁴³ See Pri Etz Chayim, Shaar Chag HaMatzot Ch. 7; Etz Chayim Shaar 14 (Shaar Abba v’Imma) Ch. 1; Shaar 15 (Shaar Holadat Abba v’Imma) Ch. 6; Shaar 29 (Shaar HaNesirah) Ch. 6; Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 25.

as it states,⁵⁴⁴ “The Egyptians embittered the lives of our fathers (*Avoteinu*) in Egypt, as written,⁵⁴⁵ ‘They embittered their lives.’” That is, the term “our fathers-*Avoteinu*-אבותינו” here, refers to the intellectual minds of the father-*Abba* and mother-*Imma* (*Chochmah* and *Binah*) and it is in this aspect that there was the matter of embitterment etc.

However, the redemption specifically came from the aspect of the crown-*Keter* (*Arich Anpin*). Nevertheless, it was necessary for the matter to come forth and become enclothed in father-*Abba* and mother-*Imma*. This is because, regarding the aspect of crown-*Keter* as it is, in and of itself, it is in a manner in which⁵⁴⁶ “darkness and light are the same.” Thus, in order for there to be a differentiation between,⁵⁴⁷ “*HaShem*-יהוה” will strike Egypt, striking them and providing healing for Israel,” it was necessary for the crown-*Keter* to specifically come to be enclothed within the father-*Abba* and mother-*Imma* (meaning, in the chaining down of the worlds – *Hishtalshelut*). Nevertheless, this enclothing (*Hitlabshut*) was in such a manner that the dominant aspect was the crown-*Keter*. This is because the matter of redemption could not possibly come from the aspects of the father-*Abba* and mother-*Imma*, but specifically only from the aspect of crown-*Keter*.

The same is likewise true regarding the manner in which the intellect (*Sechel*) manifests and becomes garbed in the emotions (*Midot*). That is, even though the intellect undergoes

⁵⁴⁴ Liturgy of the Passover Haggadah

⁵⁴⁵ Exodus 1:14

⁵⁴⁶ Psalms 139:12; See Siddur Im Divrei Elokim Chayim 293c and on.

⁵⁴⁷ Isaiah 19:22; Zohar II 36a

change according to the manner of the emotions, nevertheless, the intellect is dominant. In other words, the emotions are emotions of intellect, rather than natural emotions, and each emotion is roused according to the manner of the intellect. That is, when a person understands intellectually that he must bestow kindness, the emotional quality of kindness (*Chessed*) becomes aroused in him, and when he intellectually understands the opposite, the quality of judgment (*Gevurah*) becomes aroused in him. We thus see that the intellect is dominant.

All the above relates to the first manner of garments (*Levushim*), in which the upper aspect dominates and conducts the lower aspect. Now, even though this is dissimilar to the matter of the vessels (*Keilim*), for when it comes to the vessels (*Keilim*), even though the revelation of the form (*Tzurah*) is also in accordance to the substance (*Chomer*) (as previously explained), nevertheless, the actual thing itself is the form (*Tzurah*).

For example, in the manifestation of the intellect (*Sechel*) within the brain, it exists as intellect, only that it accords to the manner of the substance (*Chomer*). However, when it comes to the enclothing (*Hitlabshut*) of the statures (*Partzufim*) one within the other, this is not so. In this case, the existence that is apparent is that of the garment, as in the aforementioned analogies, but even so, the enclothing (*Hitlabshut*) is in a way that the upper aspect still dominates. In this particular aspect – the upper aspect remains dominant – and indeed is similar to the matter of the vessels (*Keilim*). However, there is a second manner of garments (*Levushim*), in which not

only are they not unified to the light (*Ohr*), but also are not sublimated to it, and thus the garments (*Levush*) dominate.

With the above in mind we may understand that the matter of the vessels (*Keilim*) is in the world of Creation-*Briyah*. For, even though about the world of Creation-*Briyah* it states that “He and His life force are not one,” and they are in a state of separation, nevertheless, it is this loftier manner of the aspect of garments (*Levushim*) that possesses a similarity to the matter of vessels (*Keilim*).

In other words, when it comes to the creatures of the world of Creation-*Briyah*, even though they have a sense of separate existence, they nevertheless are completely nullified to the Godly vitality and the primary and dominant aspect is the Godly vitality. Thus, it is according to the manner of the Godly vitality that the creation is conducted. This may be compared to the fish of the sea. Immediately upon leaving the sea, they begin to die.⁵⁴⁸ We thus see that even though have a certain existence outside the waters, nevertheless, it is felt in them that the primary aspect of their existence is their source and that they are nullified and sublimated to their source.

5.

Now, all the above was stated specifically about the world of Creation-*Briyah*. However, in the world of Formation-*Yetzirah* the matter of the garments (*Levushim*) is in a different

⁵⁴⁸ Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zarah 3b

manner, in that the garment dominates. In other words, the creature does not feel sublimated and nullified to its source. An example is that the angel Metatron (who is in the world of Formation-*Yetzirah*) was smitten with sixty lashes of fire,⁵⁴⁹ because of having done something that gave him the appearance of being an independent being. This is what is meant when it states that there is an admixture of good and evil in the world of Formation-*Yetzirah*.⁵⁵⁰ For, although there is no actual evil there, God forbid that one should think so, nevertheless, through the abundant chaining down of things it is possible for it to appear that there is evil. This then, is what is meant by our statement that the garments (*Levushim*) of the world of Formation-*Yetzirah* are in a manner that the conduct accords to the garment (*Levush*).

As this relates to the matter of the letters (*Otiyot*), this is the difference between the letters of speech (*Dibur*) and the letters of thought (*Machshavah*). For, in regard to the letters of thought (*Machshavah*), even though they too are separate, as explained before, nonetheless, when a person thinks about something, his mind must be bonded (and preoccupied) with the intellectual matter itself. In contrast, in regard to speech, it is possible for a person to say the opposite of what he thinks. This is because speech (*Dibur*) is completely separate, and therefore,

⁵⁴⁹ Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 15a; Also see Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as HaShem Is One, Vol. 3, (The Letters of Creation, Part 2), The Gate explaining that the motion of the intellect-*Sechel* influences the sphere-*Galgai*; Also see the discourse entitled “*Kvod Malchutcha*” 5712, translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe – 5712, Discourse 1, and the citations there.

⁵⁵⁰ See Etz Chayim, Shaar 43 (Shaar Tziyur Olamot), introduction to the Drush; Shaar 47 (Shaar Seder ABY”A) Ch. 4; Shaar 48 (Shaar HaKelipot) Ch. 3

the letters (*Otiyot*) of his speech cover over the light (*Ohr*) of his thoughts and intellect. For although it is true that through the letters of speech (*Dibur*), “after the passage of forty years a person can come to realize the inner depth of the intention of his teacher,”⁵⁵¹ nevertheless, the letters (*Otiyot*) of speech themselves are completely separate and cover over the light (*Ohr*) of the intellect.

However, even the letters of speech are not complete concealment, since the purpose of letters (*Otiyot*) is to reveal. Nonetheless, this is only so if the letters (*Otiyot*) are arranged in their proper order. However, if the letters (*Otiyot*) are not arranged in their proper order, which is the matter of the partitions (*Parsa 'ot*), which completely conceal, this is not so. This may be compared to the garment of the foot, which is the shoe, since the shoe completely separates one's feet from the earth.

This then, is the difference between all other garments (*Levushim*) and the shoe (*Na'al*). That is, all other garments, (*Levushim*) other than the shoe, are fine and therefore can be penetrated by moisture. That is, they only separate solid matter, rather than liquid. However, the shoe, which is made of animal hide, is so coarse that it creates complete separation, so that even moisture does not penetrate it. This is the matter of the chambers-*Heichalot* of the world of Action-*Asiyah* (the place where created beings are situated, which even includes the angelic beings, since they too receive their light and vitality

⁵⁵¹ See Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zarah 5b

specifically through the chambers-*Heichalot*). That is, they are brought into being through the medium of partitions (*Parsa 'ot*), which cause complete separation and concealment.

This matter may be compared to the matter of analogies (*Mashal*), which are completely separate from the analogue. For, in regard to the letters of speech (*Dibur*), though they too are garments (*Levush*) of the second type, in that the garment (*Levush*) dominates, nevertheless, they are not completely separate to the extent that they actually are separate matters. In contrast, analogies (*Mashalim*) are actually completely separate from the analogue and are foreign to the intellectual matter. The same is true of the chambers-*Heichalot* of the world of Action-*Asiyah*.

Now, everything we have stated above relates to the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*) as it is considered in and of itself. For, when it comes to all levels of the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*), even the lowest of levels, in and of themselves they cannot be in a state of opposition to Godliness. However, because of an even lower level, the matter of sin is in a state of opposition to Godliness. This is comparable to a riddle (*Chidah*) as opposed to an analogy, in that a riddle completely conceals.

To explain, there is a difference between an analogy (*Mashal*) and a riddle (*Chidah*).⁵⁵² That is, even though an analogy (*Mashal*) is the introduction of something foreign to the analogue, nonetheless its purpose is to reveal. An example

⁵⁵² See *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 2 p. 973, and elsewhere.

of this may be understood from the teacher/student relationship. When a teacher wishes to bestow an intellectual matter to his student, but due to the limited capacity of the student's grasp or due to the depth of the concept, it is impossible for him to bestow it directly, as it is, it becomes necessary for him to give over the intellect through the use of analogies. This being so, even though the analogy is foreign to the intellect, nevertheless, its purpose is to reveal.

In contrast, the matter of a riddle (*Chidah*) is that the intention is to conceal. As known, This is the purpose of a riddle (*Chidah*). Thus, because of the level of riddle (*Chidah*) the matter of sin becomes possible.

This then, is the general difference between an analogy (*Mashal*) and a riddle (*Chidah*). The analogy is similar to the state of things as they were before to the sin of Adam, the first man, whereas the riddle is how things are after the sin. In other words, even though before the sin there was actual physicality, in the literal sense, nevertheless, Godliness was revealed, only that it was revealed through the physical. This is similar to an analogy (*Mashal*) which is foreign to the analogue but reveals it. In contrast, after the sin, the state of things became comparable to a riddle (*Chidah*), which is a matter of complete concealment.

6.

Now, just as there are a number of different manners of manifestation and enclothing (*Hitlabshut*) in the levels of the

chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*), this is likewise the case regarding the descent of the soul to become enlothed in the body and animalistic soul. This enlothement of the soul could be in a number of different ways. However, (since the Godly soul is not in need of rectification) and the intent of its descent and manifestation in the body is to refine and rectify the animalistic soul,⁵⁵³ the way it becomes enlothed must be in a manner that is similar to the enlothement of the lights (*Orot*) in the vessels (*Keilim*) or at the very least, like the enlothement of the various statures (*Partzufim*) one within the other. For in both these cases, the Godly soul dominates, whereas the animalistic soul receives its vitality from the Godly soul and thus becomes refined by it. Therefore, contemplation (*Hitbonenut*) into matters such as these is necessary, in order to explain it to the animalistic soul, so that it too will grasp it.

However, it also is possible that the enlothement is in a way that the animalistic soul is dominant, which is the matter that was introduced by the sin of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That is, just as the sin caused complete concealment in the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*), so likewise, after the sin it became possible for the animalistic soul to become dominant.

It is to this end that the *mitzvah* of the half *shekel* was given, for through it rectification is brought about, so that the state and standing of things becomes as they were at the beginning of creation, when “the world was created in a state of

⁵⁵³ Etz Chayim, Shaar 26 (Shaar HaTzelem) Chap. 1, cited in Tanya, Chap. 37 (48b).

wholeness.”⁵⁵⁴ For, when Adam, the first man sinned, contamination descended into the world. However, when the Jewish people received the Torah at Mount Sinai, the contamination ceased.⁵⁵⁵ Then, when they subsequently sinned with the sin of the golden calf, the contamination returned.⁵⁵⁶ Thus, it is to this end that the *mitzvah* of the half *shekel* was given, the substance of which is to be⁵⁵⁷ “an atonement for your souls,” through which the world is returned to its state and standing as it was at the time of creation, when “the world was created in a state of wholeness.” In other words, it is in order to bring about a bond between the physical and the spiritual, between the animalistic soul and the Godly soul.

This then, is why we serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, by giving a half *shekel* – ten *gera* – referring to the matter of the ten soul powers of the animalistic soul. Through doing so, we are then granted the other half *shekel* from Above, referring to the ten soul powers of the Godly soul.⁵⁵⁸ About this the verse states,⁵⁵⁹ “And *HaShem*-יהו"ה God formed-*Vayitzer*-וַיִּצֶר the man,” in which two *Yod's*-י-10 are used in the word, “formed-*Vayitzer*-וַיִּצֶר,” referring to the ten powers of the Godly soul and the ten powers of the animalistic soul.

⁵⁵⁴ See Midrash Bereishit Rabba 14:7; 12:6; 13:3 (and Yefei To'ar commentary there); Also see Sefer HaMashalim of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as The Book of Allegories, Ch. 1-4.

⁵⁵⁵ See Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 145b and on; Zohar I 52b; Zohar II 193b

⁵⁵⁶ See Zohar *ibid*.

⁵⁵⁷ Exodus 30:15:16

⁵⁵⁸ See the end of the discourse entitled “*Zeh Yitnu*” 5675 (*Hemshech* 5672 *ibid*. p. 874).

⁵⁵⁹ Genesis 2:7; See Talmud Bavli, Brachot 61a and elsewhere.

The toil in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is for the purpose of affecting a bond between them. The order of this in man's service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is to only give a half *shekel*, referring to the matter of rectifying the ten powers of the animalistic soul. Through doing so, he is granted a revelation of the ten powers of the Godly soul from Above, so that they illuminate within the animalistic soul, to the point that they become bonded and unified as one, like the union between the light (*Ohr*) and the vessel (*Klee*). Through this *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Supernal intent in creation is perfected and completed, in that "The Holy One, blessed is He, desired a dwelling place for Himself in the lower worlds."⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁶⁰ See Midrash Tanchuma Bechukotai 3, Naso 16; Midrash Bamidbar Rabba 13:6; Tanya Ch. 36, and elsewhere.